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SERMON

PREACHED at

Sudbury in the County of *Suffolk*,

AT A

LECTURE

Set up there, for the last *Summers* half Year :

With the Approbation of the

BISHOP of the DIOCESE,

By the Clergy of that Deanery,

TO PREACH

Upon the points in Controversie, between
the Church of *Rome*, and the Church of
England.

By WILLIAM BATTIE, a Presbyter of the
Church of *England*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Sam. Carr*, at the Sign of the King's Head
at the West end of *St. Paul's*. 1680.

SERMON

Preached in the County of York

LECTURE

BISHOP of the Diocese

of the County of York

TO PREACH

at the point in the County of York

the Church of York and the Church of

London

Church of England

Church of England

Church of England

Church of England

Church of England

To the Reverend my Brethren of the Clergy of *Suffolk* and Diocese of *Normich*.

IT is published to the whole Nation, whether I will or no, that I have endeavoured, according to the Laws, to serve the established Government in Church and State. And that I have met with affronts for what I have done, which I have ever slighted, because the respect I have found among wellwillers to Loyalty, hath counterpoised all the unkind usage I have met with. And I should not at this time in the least murmur at my being openly traduced by the Pen of a Licentious Libeller, but that my friends are made to partake in the intended Infamy, and suspected the being no Protestants, in being my friends. Which thing I hope justifies my expostulating the matter with my accusers, what it is I am chargeable with, that looks like Popery, at a time very inconvenient to be suspected of it.

I do confesse, I never was a Friend to a Toleration of Dissenters of what denomination soever, in their open and daring transgression of the Laws. Now, if for this I must be Popish; then by rule of Contraries, the Papists that were lately Executed should be Protestants, for they were zealous for a Toleration: and one of them declared at his Tryall, that they intended not the introducing of Popery by the Kings death, but by a Toleration. I know the Papists were onely for a Toleration for their own ends, nor were any other that I ever heard of, any longer for it, than till their turn were served by it. They who at this day take more Liberty than I am sure the Law allows them, would not Tolerate in the late times their Lawfull King his own Chaplains, nor his Subjects the use of the Common-Prayer in their own houses, nor the Clergy that read it, houses of their own to live in. And I know the end the Papists proposed by a Toleration is as unlike the mean, as one Term of a Contradiction is to the other, for what likeness is
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there in a Toleration, to the Popish Inquisition? and the certain prospect I had of the danger there was of a Toleration ending in an Inquisition, from the fierce opposition I met with from some projecting Papists for my zeal on the behalf of the Government, I do solemnly protest to be the chief motive of that zeal.

And of that opposition, if it were a thing to be argued in any Court, I could produce considerable witnesses. But before his Majesty I should not need any.

For the Popular objection I have often heard of, that the Clergy are onely to preach people to Church, I ever thought it the Shepherds work as to provide his flock of Pasture, so to preserve it from being devoured of Wolves, and to keep his Sheep from stragling. But for the task of Preaching people to Church, where shall we do it? when they will neither come to the house of God, nor to ours, nor receive us with the respect owing their Pastours into their own houses. This puts me in mind of Archimedes his undertaking to remove the Earth, which he could not do, without a place to plant his Engines on. No more can we preach people to Church, though we think it more practicable, than to remove the Earth, till a place be assigned us for it. The preaching that is in publick, is not thought inferiour by those who will hear it, to what Dissenters have in their private apartments, but we cannot preach by the Law in any place, to any number of them, where Common-Prayer is not read, and this makes the dull Earth it will not move; So that the counsell to the Clergy would be more proper, Bribe your Consciences, dispense with your Subscriptions, and Oaths of Canonick Obedience. But this we cannot do our selves, and we have no Pope to do it for us in the Church of England. But whence is it that Common-Prayer is so frightfull? The thing pretended is, that it is Popish, when yet it was compiled by them who were burnt for Protestants; and had they not been so served, it is much to be questioned, whether they would have preserved down to these times, the repute for Protestants: for it is not Confiscation of goods, Imprisonment, Banishment, that will satisfy some men at this day, that the Clergy of the Communion of the Church of England in the late times were Protestants: for they wanted for none of these tryals, and yet though they persisted

steadfastly

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stedfastly in the defence of the Church of England against Popery, even in the time of their Exile, to the hazard of their lives from Papists, they are not allowed the name of true Protestants.

It is worth the relating here, what we are told of the Excellent Bishop Bramhall, by the Right Reverend Person who writes his Life, how that during his Exile, intending to travell into Spain, because by his disputes on the behalf of the Protestant Religion, he had so incensed the Papists in Flanders, that they would no longer permit him there the least use of their Libraries, the Bishops Journey being known to the Papists, they sent his picture before him into Spain, that so soon as the Bishop came where the Inquisition took place, he was saluted by the Woman of the Inn, by his name; he desiring to know, how she came by his name, she told him that she could also shew him his picture, and that there were more of them upon the Road, and that her Husband had a Commission to apprehend him, and carry him before the Inquisitors. I suppose that if he had been apprehended and put to death, he might have had the good luck to have been accounted a Protestant; and whence was it, that escaping the snare with his life, Mr. Baxter in his Grotian Religion, could have the heart to represent him to the world, for a person Popishly inclined? Who would not judge by this usage of so great an opposer of Popery, that let men do what they can that way, their being of the Church of England is the thing that makes men Papists? And then how strangely was it provided by a late Act of Parliament, to make the receiving of the Sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England, the Shibboleth, to distinguish a Protestant from a Papist? Now, if the being of the Church of England makes us no Protestants, it must be upon the account of some fundamental miscarriage in our reformation, which was not in other Reformed Churches, who were first called Protestant, and what that was, except it be this, that we reformed regularly, we are utterly at a losse about it: Our Church was Reformed at the first by the Care and Conduct of our Lawfull Governours, in the way the Jewish Church was Reformed in the Reign of the good King Hezekiah, and the Clergy of her Communion have not been attainted of any Disloyalty from that time to this: but this, I

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know, our Adversaries will be ashamed at least to say they dislike in our Church and Clergy. If they do dislike it, we are resolved (to use the words of Job) That our righteousness in this matter, which we account our Glory, we will hold and will not let it go. And I do heartily wish, that all sober persons who have any Interest in the men of this Age who do so strangely confine and distinguish about Protestantisme, would persuade them by all means to let the Church of England have the first share at least in the Protestant Religion, because of the constant Loyalty of the men of her Communion, as they desire to keep up the honour and reputation of it; For, if they may not be permitted to be Protestants, where are Protestants to be found of any other Communion in these Nations, upon whom the late Rebellion, and the many dismall consequences of it, the Rapine, Perjury, Sacriledge, Murthers, and the King's horrid Murther too, may not be charged? And how unanswerably then must the Protestant Religion suffer reproach and scandal for all these things all the world over? But it is suggested that the Clergy of the Church of England are parté per pale Popish and Protestant, which would be very strange, when they have all the same laws, and are all under the same Oath to observe them; If they hope there are some who do not observe these Laws, though they are under the Oath of God to do it, and will vote these the Protestants, how bravely have they provided for the Protestant Religion, to lodge it amongst such as they imagine and hope are Dissemblers with God and the World?

I am sorry for the occasion given me to reflect as I do upon these things, and it may be thought impertinent, because none but imprudent men will thus distinguish about Protestantisme; But these imprudent persons having once by this Artifice of voting things and persons Popish they have no fancy for, wrought the inconsidering Vulgar into a despising, and deposing of Dignities, it's enough to make a dumb man speak, to see them attempt it the second time in the same methods. And some grains I hope will be allowed me, in speaking for my self, because of the Indignation I may justly have to be so misrepresented to the world as I am; it is but a year yet since I searched a suspected house for Jesuits, pursuant to his Majesties Proclamation,

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mation, within three weeks after which I was assaulted by four men with Swords and Pistols, being at supper in my own house; what their design was I could never yet learn; But if I had not escaped by a convenient back door, I believe they would have made me a Protestant. You are my witnesses, how readily I concurred with you about the same time in the setting up of a Lecture (our Bishop approving of it) for the last Summer half year in Sudbury, where we met with a very kind reception from the Magistrates of that Town from first to last. We agreed upon that place because of the many Papists there are in the adjacent Towns, and I am not ashamed to let it be known that our design by this Lecture was not the bare opposing of Popery, but to promote also, if it were possible, a better understanding between Us and Dissenters of other Perswasions, which if it could be effected all the Nation over, would be the certainest way to defeat all Romish designs that are on foot against us.

I am not so vain, as to imagine, that this little Narrative of my self will satisfie evil minded men, Nay, I rather suspect it may occasion another Libel, but I am advised to despise that, rather than my Innocency (for my Friends satisfaction) should not be a little vindicated. Now, I hope, it may suffice to justifie my Innocency, if not to anticipate all replies, onely to offer this one thing to be considered of, If it be a thing to be imagined, that my Adversaries (who do not seem to be men of any great mercy,) if they had had any considerable thing against me, would ever have undertaken a frivolous Indictment about an Oath of mine, made in Michaelmas Term 78. which as it slept so long, so it had ever slept in quiet, onely that in Easter Term last I indicted a Friend of theirs of Perjury, and it might very well have slept still for any harm there is in it, for they have sworn nothing that in the least contradicts it, however it happened that the Grand Jury did not perceive it, for the Oath where they lay any stresse, is onely in these words, that there being no Sessions for Ipswich at the accustomed time in July 78. I desired the Magistrates of Ipswich there might be a Sessions at the accustomed time after Michaelmas. Now it is sworn against me that there was a Sessions held at Ipswich upon the 10th. day of July 78. which was no more the accustomed time than the 10th. day of any other Moneth,

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as the Statute of the 2d. of Henry the 5th. ch. 4th. will satisfie any man that will take the pains to consult the Almanack, which was the week after the Translation of Tho. the Martyr (as the Statute calls him) in that year. I dare say the Grand Jury did not foresee, that when they had found the Bill, I was instantly to be tryed by Libellers.

Whereas it is suggested that I am deserted by the Protestant Clergy, I am bold to say, that I am sure of the contrary. I do not see, how the preferring of one friend is a deserting of another ; we live as Friends, ready to serve one another, and the publick as we have opportunity ; we live as we are taught to pray ; and that we may continue so to do, in the true faith and fear of God, in humble obedience to our King, and in Brotherly Charity one towards another, and so by well doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, is the hearty prayer of

Your affectionate Brother

and faithful Servant,

William Battie.

Hitcham, Jan. 21.

1679.

E R R A T A.

Page 19. lin. 24. for offer, reade *offers*. Page 24. lin. penult. for 300. reade 1100.^y

GALAT. III. I.

Oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth Crucified among you.

NO sooner had the blessed Labourers in the Gospel, the holy Apostles, sown the good Seed thereof, in all the places where they came, but immediately the Envious One did sow his Darnel : now as Darnel, Tares, and Weeds being more natural to the soyl, have the greater nourishment from it, and by this advantage grow and spread so fast, that the good Seed is in danger of being choaked, and quenched by them ; even so did the Tares of false Doctrine, prosper in all the Churches of the Apostles planting : such Doctrines being more congenial to the soyl of mens depraved natures, and as sown at first by the Envious One, so promoted and cherished in them with his utmost industry ; they thrive indeed so fast by these advantages, that the Apostles thought it not safe to let them alone, for the least time, but did instantly apply themselves to the weeding of them out. As we see it's our Apostles care with regard to the Churches of *Galatia*, to which he directs this Epistle. Observing of them, that they had been troubled so far, by some, whom he wish-

eth cut off for so doing, as to be seduced to relinquish the Liberty they were called to by the Gospel, and to put their Necks under the *Judaical* Yoke again, so far, as to observe Circumcision; nay, the days, months, times, and years of the Ceremonial Law. And thus even to turn again to the weak, and beggarly Elements of the Law, from which they had had a Manumission by the Gospel: which seduction of theirs, looking upon it as a piece of Fascination, and accounting of them hereupon, as persons that had been in ill handling, and practised upon by witchcraft, he begins his holy Charm against it, as he doth in the words of the Text, wherein we have these things considerable.

First, The Object of the Apostles reprehension, The Churches of *Galatia*.

Secondly, The Ground of the reprehension, Their defection from the Truth.

Thirdly, The Aggravation of the defection in the last Words, which is, That they had had a clear and manifest discovery of the great Gospel Truth wherein they wavered given them, at such time as the Gospel was first preached to them, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently, &c.*

To consider of the two first of these in connexion, the Object of the reprehension, the Churches of *Galatia*; and the Matter of it, their defection from the Truth, into a very great error; the holding of Circumcision, and the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses* still necessary to Salvation, which the Apostle calls, *the making of the Cross of Christ of no effect, and a denial of his being come in the flesh*; These things considered together we do learn

learn from this Scripture, *That particular Churches are fallible.*

In the handling of which proposition, I will only briefly shew, what we mean by a particular Church, and then proceed to shew, whereby it may be made to appear, that such a Church is fallible.

What we are to understand by Church in general, we are taught it in the first and second Chapters of the *Acts* of the Apostles: in the first Chapter the fifteenth Verse, we read that the number of Names together, (Apostles and Disciples) were about 120, which being increased, (as we read in the next Chapter,) to a very great number, by *S. Peter's* Sermon, we farther read, *that they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers; and so continuing, they are called a Church, for it follows, the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved.*

From the Scripture, a Church may be duly described, a Company of Believers united together in the Profession of the same Faith, Administration of the same Sacraments, and Celebration of the same Devotions, under their lawfull Governours. Now as to what we mean by particular Churches, if we look into the Scriptures, we shall find, that when they speak of any Country where the Gospel had been preached, they mention the Churches of that Country. Thus we read of the Churches of *Judea, Cilicia, Syria, and Galatia*; because of the several Congregations in those great Countries, each having its particular Bishop over it, and thereby becoming a particular Church. And again in the holy Scriptures, because of the subordination of these

Churches under one Head, we do sometimes read of Church only in the singular number, as of the Church of *Corinth*, the Church of *Jerusalem*, and the Church of the *Thessalonians*; particular Churches all, because of their subjection each to his own single supreme Governour: and as several Churches are reduced to the denomination of one Church, in relation to the single Governour of those many Churches; so all the Churches of all Cities, and all Nations under heaven, may be reduced to the same single denomination of Church, in relation to one supreme Governour of them all, which is the notion of the Church we mention in our Creed, the Catholick, or Universal Church: The Universal Church is called so, because all other Churches are members of it; and whereas every particular Church hath its own particular supreme Governour upon earth, the Universal Church hath no other one particular Head, that we read of, either in the Scriptures, or in the Writings of the Ancient Fathers, but what she hath in heaven, even our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the chief Bishop of our Souls.

Now to shew that particular Churches are Fallible, I say particular Churches; for of the Universal Church it cannot be affirmed, that remaining, when any particular Church erreth, in those parts that do not erre, whether they be more or less. That a particular Church may fall into error, it may serve for one argument to perswade us of it, to consider what it consists of; now what consists such a Church of, but Persons all Fallible, Head and Members being all sinfull and so, unable to secure themselves from defection; and where the integral parts are such, what can the whole be that consists
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of them ? we cannot imagine that they are any other in union, than what they are separately considered ; every Member being fallible, it cannot be natural to the Body made up of them, to be otherwise; and the Body, the Church then, that lays claim to the prerogative of Infallibility, must do it upon the account of special supervenient Grace, and be able when called to it, to shew their Patent for it from the Donor of it.

Now whereas the Church of *Rome* doth very much insist upon this priviledge ; and contend for it, and that very earnestly, and not without very great cause ; it will not be amiss to consider here what it is that Church produceth as a Grant or Patent for this wonderfull priviledge , her being invested with it.

And first of all, they much insist upon that promise of *Christ* in the fourteenth of *S. John*, the sixteenth Verse, where he tells his Disciples, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever* : which Scripture, were the Profelytes of that Church allowed the Bible in their Mother tongue, and thereby able to see how the promise is conditioned, and restrained in the foregoing Verse, and the Verse that follows, they would possibly have as much to do to perswade them, as us, of their Churches Infallibility, from that Text. For if according to their own doctrine, the Infallibility of their Church depends upon the Pope's Infallibility, in confirming the Decrees of Councils, and his unerring faculty depends upon this Promise, the Promise being so Conditional as it is, they must give us leave to stay for satisfaction, how their Popes answer these Con-

ditions, before we shall believe them Infallible, from this Scripture; they must be such as keep God's Commandment, Ver. 15. as expect to partake of this Promise, and Ver. 17. it is flatly denied the men the Scriptures stile by the name of the World, that is, all wicked and worldly minded Men, who only mind earthly things, and so is made the peculiar privilege of such *whose Conversation*, as the Apostles words are, *is in Heaven*; but how the Popes of *Rome* for many Centuries have answered these conditions, let their own Historians, *Onuphrius*, and *Platina* be judges.

Again, it is considerable that by the tenour of the whole Chapter, this promise was made to the Disciples our Saviour was then speaking to, and it was shortly after made good to them: but let the *Romanists* imagine it to be made in the most peculiar manner to their Church that may be; I conceive the promise of God's Spirit to lead a Church into all truth, is then performed, when sufficient direction is afforded in the things necessary to be believed and done of Christians. But may not a Church be thus led, and yet not follow? and in case she doth not follow the leading, she as certainly stays in error, as the man continues in darkness, who being brought out of a dark Dungeon into the open Sun, there shuts his eyes, and will not look about him: God doth neither here, nor any where else promise the Church of *Rome*, or any other Church, his Holy Spirit, to lead them into all truth, whether they will or no; now if a man have never so infallible a Guide in his journey, if he will only take his own way, and go counter to his Guides direction, he must needs erre
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and wander all the day, and be far enough from coming to his journeys end at night; and this I fear is the case of the *Roman Church*, they have a good Guide, a sure Word that leads them into sundry truths; as that Images are not to be worshipped, that the Communion is to be received in both kinds, that Prayers and Praises are to be performed in a known tongue; but if they will not follow as they are led, they must erre as their Ancestors have done for many generations, let them talk what they will of being secured by this or any other promise of Infallibility.

Another Scripture they insist upon, is that in the 1 *Tim. 3. 15.* *That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the Pillar and ground of the truth*: here the Church being called the Pillar and ground of the truth, the Proposer, and Preserver of the truth, she must be Infallible: Thus this Scripture is expounded generally by the *Romanists*, and thus they lay it for a foundation of their Infallibility; but now if we admit of an Ellipsis here of the word, *as*, a frequent figure in the holy Scripture, and without which we are not able to make any sense of sundry Scriptures, there is not the least footing from this Scripture for the Churches infallibility, for thus the words, *σύλα και ἐδεξίωμα*, Pillar and ground are affirmed of *Timothy*, and not of the Church, and then the sense is only this, That thou mightest know how to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, as a Pillar and ground of the truth. Now to shew the frequency of this figure, I might mention sundry Scriptures where it is used,

as particularly *Gen. 49. 9. Judas Catulus*, where the sense certainly is, *Judas is as a Lions whelp*, *Psal. the 111. 1. נִדְרֵי צִפּוֹר Flee Bird*, which the Septuagint renders by the Adverb, *ὥς, Flee as a Bird to the mountains*; others conceive there is an Ellipsis of the Participle *ὥν*, which is often understood, and not expressed, as in the first words of the Lord's Prayer, *ὁ ἐν ὑενοῖς*, where *ὥν* is understood. Now the words thus expounded, they are a direction to *Timothy*, to behave himself in the House of God, the Church of the living God, as becomes a Pillar of the truth, or he being a Pillar of the truth; and it is well known, the title Pillar is elsewhere given the Rulers of the Church, as *Gal. 2. 9.* and *Rev. 3. 12.* and it is readier by far to conceive the Apostle ascribing the title to *Timothy*, rather than to the Church, as *Mr. Chillingworth* observes, because the Church is here certainly called House, and to be called House, and Pillar, and Foundation in the same place, is not so congruous. But waving this very probable and safe exposition, and let the words, Pillar and ground, be affirmed of the Church, why must the Church be meant of the Church of *Rome*, and not of *Ephesus* where *Timothy* was Bishop? But farther grant them this also, that this Scripture speaks of the Church of *Rome*, and that the Church of *Rome* is peculiarly the Pillar and ground, that is, the Proposer, the Preserver, and the Upholder of truth, and nothing but the truth, and the Opposer of all error; it is well known there are sundry perfections and properties in holy Writ, ascribed to persons and things, which are ascribed not as notes of performance, but of duty, not that they necessarily have these per-

perfections, and that they necessarily discharge such offices, and cannot do otherwise, but because they ought to be endowed with such gifts, and it is much their duty to discharge such offices. And thus the Church of *Rome*, as all other Churches are, is by duty, the Pillar and ground, and Buttress of truth, that is, the Proposer of all necessary truths, and the Oppugner of all error; this, I say, she is by duty bound to be; but yet she may neglect and fail in the duty, and be in fact the teacher of error, for any thing there is in this Scripture to the contrary. I suppose it was as much the duty of the Church of the *Jews*, as it is of the *Roman* Church to propose nothing but the truth, and that there is as much to be said for the Infallibility of that Church, as any other; and the Papists must needs suppose it, seeing they make the Infallibility of that Church a *medium* to prove their own by; and indeed we find in the Book of *Deut.* that the regard was very great, the *Jews* were obliged in to all the decisions of their Church, in all matters of Controversie, *Deut.* 17. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. the *Israelites* were commanded upon pain of death in all hard matters to repair to the Priests in Council, *in the place which God should choose*, and to abide by their determinations. And seeing what they delivered was to be regarded in this manner, it was certainly their duty to be very wary in what they delivered, and to tell the People nothing but the truth. But if they were Infallible, how necessarily must the Papists justify the *Jews* in accounting the Blessed *Jesus* an Impostor, and *Judas* a good Commonwealths man for the betraying of him?

Now to propound another Argument, which

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shall be this ; If particular Churches have fallen into error, then such Churches may still be accounted Fallible ; but it hath often happened that such Churches have fallen into error, and therefore we have no reason to think any other of them at this day ; this Argument is grounded upon that undeniable Maxime, *ab esse ad posse valet consequentia*. Now that such Churches have erred, besides what we have in the Text to this purpose, we have more instances in the second and third Chap. of the *Revel. of St. John* ; the advice is considerable to this purpose, which is given the Church of *Sardis*, *Rev. 3. 3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast* ; which advice plainly implies her defection through error, for remedies are always adapted to the disease, the remedy then prescribed the Church of *Sardis* being her remembring what she had received and heard, and her holding of it fast for the future, (an Exhortation frequently given with regard to sound doctrine) her disease must be her defection from the doctrine she had formerly heard and received into error ; but we meet with much more this way in Church History : We read that in the days of the Emperours, *Constantius* and *Valens*, even the whole visible Church did *Arrianize*, that it grew into a Proverb, *Athanasius against the World, and the World against Athanasius*. The Councils of *Milain*, and *Sirmium* which were *Arrian*, were subscribed by the heads of sundry Churches, so that to alledge particular Churches have not erred, it is great impudence to do it, because it contradicts so many undeniable testimonies of all Historians.

Now to consider what reply it is the Papists make

make us here. Upon this Argument that Churches having erred they may erre, they retort upon us, that if the Church is Fallible, she may have been deceived in delivering the Canon of the holy Scriptures, and have subtracted from what is Canonical, and delivered that for Canonical that is not, and then what certainty are they at, for what they believe, who so magnifie the holy Scriptures, when if the Church they have them by be deceivable, they are uncertain whether or no they have any authentick Scriptures ? But now what is this any other than only a fallacious arguing, called, *à dicto secundum quid, ad dictum simpliciter* : For we affirm this fallibility only of a particular Church, whose witness is but a small part of the testimony that authenticates the Canon of the Scripture, the testimony in whole of this being only the concurring consent of all Churches in all ages. If there were no Church but a particular Church of the present age to be relied on, their arguing would amount to something ; but seeing there is another, and a far greater testimony, even Universal Tradition, their arguing, (to use Mr. *Chillingworth's* resemblance) is only , as if a man should go about to perswade us, that if the Vintage of *France* miscarry, we can have no Wine from *France*, and therefore if that Vintage miscarry we can have no Wine at all, which every one must acknowledge to be a silly lame arguing. If a Brook be branched into several streams, and one proves muddy, does it follow that we can have no clean water by going upwards to where they are united, and come nearer to the Fountain head ? The stream of *Rome* is only a particular stream, and it runs muddy, very

muddy, and hath done so for many Ages, and must do so till a Commission of Sewers can be by good authority granted for the cleansing of it, for it is much to be feared, the Pope and his Cardinals will never do it by agreement among themselves. But go we up this stream to where it run purer in the four first Centuries of the Church, and where it unites and agrees with the streams of other Churches, and more upward still, till we come to the Fountain, the Primitive belief of the Universal Church, and to this testimony we will stand, for the Canon of the Scriptures, and all other things of importance to be believed by us.

But here it is farther objected by the Papists, and it is that they make the greatest noise with, that the Canon of the Scripture being stated, the Church however that is not infallible, hath no way left her of deciding infallibly all differences and controversies that may arise, about the interpretation of Canonical Scriptures. Seeing they cannot suppress the holy Scriptures, which we may believe they would if they could, by their forbidding the publishing of them in a known tongue, they endeavour heartily, by this pretence of their sole Infallibility, to ingross (which would be as much to their purpose as the suppressing of them,) the sole interpretation of them to their Church alone.

Now there be three things suggested in this Objection, to amuse the Men they would Proselyte, which if we consider them by themselves, it will appear, there is nothing in the whole Objection, but chaff, to take young Birds with.

First, They would insinuate by this Objection, that there is an absolute necessity of having all controversies,

verfies infallibly decided that may arife about the interpretation of difficult places in the holy Scriptures.

Secondly, That it in the power of their Church to do it.

Thirdly, That the Church that hath not this power, is at uncertainty in the Faith.

Now as to the first thing pretended in this Objection, If we look into the holy Scriptures never so wishly, we shall not find, that they do speak at all of any such neceffity there is of having all controversies infallibly determined, that may arife about the Interpretation of them; but on the contrary they call us off from turmoiling our selves in disputes and controversies, as an unprofitable exercise. And how can we imagine, that it indangers salvation to be ignorant in some controverted points, when we find the Apostles after they had received the Holy Ghost in so wonderfull a manner, as they did upon the day of Pentecost, to lead them into all truth, ignorant themselves and under mistakes, about a revealed truth, viz. the preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*; and the opinion that they were to preach the Gospel only to the *Jews*, prevailed among them, till such time, as St. Peter by his Vision and *Cornelius's* Conversion, was clearly convinced of the contrary. Heb. 13. 9.

For the second thing pretended, that it is in the power of their Church to interpret infallibly all the difficult places that be in the holy Scriptures; The vanity of this pretence is sufficiently shewn, onely by telling them, that they have not given the world any proof of any such admirable faculty belonging to their Church; and would such a Light as this be put under a Bushel? should such a Talent as this

lie buried among them? It were enough, were there any such thing as modesty and shame among them, to make them give over their vain glorying, to hear the Profoundest Expositors of the *Roman* Communion, acknowledge themselves ignorant of the meaning of divers places in the holy Scriptures, and for want of certainty, pass their several Conjectures upon them, and swell their Comments upon the Scriptures into numberless Volumes, none of which they dare Vote Infallible.

If they have this Infallibility among them, could they employ it better, than by writing one infallible Comment upon the whole Bible? for what a benefit would this be to the Christian World! how might men by the reading of this one, spare the time they spend in reading the infinite fallible Comments, and bestow it upon their Souls in far more serviceable performances? They who hold the Pope whilst he is in his Chair, to be Infallible, how worthy and beneficial a thing would it be for them, to hold him there, from day to day, till he had Writ a Comment upon the whole Bible, we might safely abide by as Infallible; as *Aaron*, and *Hur* caused *Moses* to sit down, and held up his hands, till the *Amalekites* were destroyed; this would be a quick and speedy way, to put to the rout all the *Amalekite* Errours and Heresies they so complain of: but whilst no such thing is done, it's nothing but impudence in them to vaunt it as they do of such an excellent Gift, that lies idle amongst them, and that they employ not in some suitable projects.

For the third thing this Objection insinuates, which is, that the Church that hath no Infallibility, hath no sure footing, as they call it, for Faith, where-
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by they endeavour to represent all Protestants to their Profelytes, for a Company of silly faithless persons :

To this we rejoyne, that for the things we propose as necessarily to be believed, we are upon the same certainty with themselves. That the Scriptures are the word of God, and that all the things contained in them be consequently true, we have the undoubted, because a never denied Tradition from that time to this, of the mighty Miracles whereby their Divinity was first vouched to the world ; and what ever words they may use about it, *I* believe this is all the certainty the *Romanists* themselves have in the same thing. Now if they have the same for the points wherein they differ from us that have no footing in the holy Scriptures, a certainty thus grounded upon universal Tradition, concerning the proof of their Divinity, though we do not call it Infallibility, it shall prevail with us to be of the same mind with them in these points ; but though we do not brag of Infallibility, we are so much for certainty, that we expect first to have this tradition well proved to us, but they are so well advised as not to insist upon any such Tradition ; and here it would be considered, what it is then they would persuade us by into a belief of all the Doctrines of their Church. We call to them, as well we may, for good proof of the Doctrine of the Infallibility of their Church, it is a foundation point, and they build a great weight upon it, and therefore it had need be lain sure, they offer us no Miracles, we read nothing of it in the holy Scripture, shall we take their word for their Infallibility, and upon the account of their Infallibility believe
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all their other doctrines? they do as good as say it ; for when we call for proof, they tell us we must consult God's visible Church with submissive acknowledgment of her infallibility. A very compendious way of proof, we must believe them Infallible because they say it , and take it purely upon the credit of their Church ; to which *Beza* in his Comment upon these words of St. Paul's to *Timothy*, *the Pillar and ground of the truth* , make this very apt reply , taking notice of the brags and gloryings of the Church of *Rome* , from that and other Scriptures, about her Infallibility, and when called upon for some substantial proof of it, all her boasting dwindles into her own Infallible testimony , he concludes , *Who ever took a known Whores word in commendation of her own honesty ?*

Now for the other thing we have in the Text, the aggravation of the *Galatians* defection from the truth they had first received.

The Apostle sharpens his reprehension here from the consideration of the clear understanding that had been given them of the sum of the Christian Religion, upbraiding them with it, that *Christ* Crucified had been formerly as convincingly declared among them by his Preaching, as if he had been set before their eyes nailed to the Cross among them, as the Learned Dr. *Hammond* glosseth upon the words. They had been rightly informed in the way of Salvation, *Christ*, and him Crucified, and that they should be imposed upon so far as to expect it in any other way, as by the works of the Ceremonial Law , now made void by *Christ* ; the Apostle is so offended with them for it, as to reproach them with the titles of foolish, and bewitched persons :

sons: whence we may fairly raise this observation.

That it is a great reproach to those, who after clear evidence of the true Faith professed in the Church they belong unto, do make defection from it. Undoubtedly the Apostles indignation, had never else been raised to this height against the *Galatians*, to bestow upon them the titles he doth, for their inconstancy to the Faith he had newly grounded them in.

That which here would be spoken to is this, What is it, that Men may satisfy themselves by, that they are of that Church, that hath the true Faith professed in it; that is, all those Doctrines that are of necessity to be believed in order to salvation? For satisfaction here, we are to consider, what it is we may duly account the only standard of this true Faith, for which our Church in the Sixth Article of Religion, teaches us to have our recourse to the holy Scriptures in these words. *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.* Which position, if we be able by good reasoning from Scripture, and Antiquity, to make good against all opposition, our Church receiving and teaching all that for truth, that either directly, or by good consequence, is delivered to us in holy Writ; we may confidently infer, that they who enjoy the blessing of the Communion of the Church of *England*, they are of that Church, that hath the true Faith professed in it.

Now to make this out against those who mainly
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oppose us here, the Church of *Rome*, I doubt not but it may be done from a principle wherein they and we are agreed, which is, that the holy Scriptures are of Divine Authority. This, I think, they do agree with us in, that the Scriptures are of Divine Inspiration, only they will not allow them to contain in them, a sufficient direction in all things needfull to salvation, without the supplement of their Tradition; nor will they allow any sense legitimate, but what is made so by the Interpretation of their Church; which two Posts were they able to maintain, they might deservedly blame us for not adhering to all their determinations. But as to the first, that very Text beats them from it, where it is said, that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*; for where the Apostle saith this, he withall assures us, *2 Tim. 3. 15. That the holy Scriptures are able to make a man wise unto salvation*: which they cannot be said to be, except they afford us a sufficient direction in all the things of necessity to be known, and done, in order to salvation; one Effect may have divers Causes concurring to the producing of it, and every Cause can onely be accounted able, that doth what belongs to it in the way of causality it is to operate in; and so that the Scriptures are said to be *able to make us wise unto salvation*; it implies, that they are able in their kind, and according to what use they are appointed to serve to us, in the work of our salvation. Now, *St. Luke*, in the Preface of his Gospel, tells us, they are given to be a *Declaration of the things surely to be believed by us*; and this being the use they are given to us for, if they be not a full, but a partial Declaration only of the things to be surely believed

believed by us, their being able implying, their being able in their kind, it cannot be affirmed of them, that they *are able to make us wise unto salvation*; but the Apostle is peremptory in it, that they *are able*: so that by good consequence from this Scripture we are assured, that the holy Scriptures do contain in them a full Declaration of all the things needfull to be surely believed by us. And what is considerable here, the Apostle affirms this of the Scriptures then in being; and what is sufficient evidence that it was his opinion, and the opinion of his Brethren, the Apostles, that they were thus able, though the Apostles were all guided by an Infallible Spirit, yet in all Controversies, they never insisted upon their Infallibility, but proved all things by the Scriptures; the *Bereans* are commended by the Apostles, for trying their Act. 17. Doctrine by the Scriptures; and of *Apollos* it is 11 said, *Acts 18.28.* that *he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ*: And herein the Apostles were the followers of their Lord and Master; who always convinced, and baffled the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* from the Scriptures; and offer to have it tried by the Scriptures, whether he was the *Messiah* or no, *search the Scriptures, for they are they who testifie of me*; and he does not endeavour to satisfy the Disciples of *John*, that he was the *Messiah*, from the Match. 12. Miracles themselves that he wrought in the presence 4. 5. of them, without minding them that it was so Prophesied long before by *Isaiah*, that the *Messiah* should at his coming work such Miracles, repeating the very words of that Prophet in the 35 of *Isaiah*, ver. 5, 6. Thus it was the constant way of

Christ and his Apostles, without insisting at all upon their Infallibility, evermore to honour the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures : And in their footsteps, shall we find all the Fathers of the first Ages of the Church walking, making their constant appeals in all Controversies concerning matters of Faith, to the holy Scriptures. *St. Austin* in his second Book of the Christian Doctrine, Chap. 9. is express in it, *That all things appertaining to Faith and Life, are most evidently contained in the holy Scriptures.* And therefore in his Book of the Unity of the Church against the *Donatists*, he hath these words, *Non audiamus, hæc dico, hæc dicis, sed audiamus, hæc dicit Dominus,* and then he proceeds, *sunt certi libri dominici, quorum authoritati, utrique consentimus, ibi quæramus Ecclesiam, ibi discutiamus causam nostram.* Thus *St. Austin* sends us to the Scriptures to find out the true Church, and the Faith it is built upon, and not without good reason, if the opinion of *St. Chrysostom* may weigh any thing with us, which we have in these words, in his 49 Homily, *Nulla modo cognoscitur quæ sit vera Ecclesia, nisi tantummodo per scripturas;* and in the same Homily, *Christus mandat, ut volentes firmitatem accipere veræ fidei, ad nullam rem fugiant, nisi ad scripturas.* For that place the Papists insist upon in the 2 *Thess.* 2. 15. as enjoying of us an equal regard to Traditions, with the holy Scriptures; concerning which Text, *Canus* tells us, *Elaborandum est ut hic locus, quàm diligentissimè explicaretur, & muniretur;* this place is to be fortified with all imaginable care; for why, *Traditions*, saith he, *have greater force in them to confute Hereticks, (meaning Protestants) than the Scriptures have:*

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An honest Confession by the way, that Protestants are not to be worsted by their Church, by any weapons the Scripture affords them for it. But for that Text, the Papists do not offer us any reason, why we should believe, that the Traditions the Apostle mentions, are any other, than what are written in the holy Scriptures, and there is nothing in the Context to the contrary; and till they bring us good reasons to the contrary, we will not believe them to be any other Traditions, than what those words of *Irenæus* induce us to account them, *Lib. 3. Cap. 1. Quod tunc præconiauerunt, postea per dei voluntatem in scripturis nobis tradiderunt*; what the Apostles first Preached, by the will of God, they did afterward by writing recommend to the use of the Church, in all future Ages. Now if these may be the Traditions here meant, there be none more for them than Protestants, for this confirms what we contend for, in the behalf of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures.

As to the other Allegation they insist upon, concerning the Interpretation, and Sense of the holy Scriptures; affirming that no Sense is legitimate, but what is made so by the Interpretation of the Church, by Church meaning no other but their own; so that though we are to go to the Scriptures onely for the true Faith, yet it is there so lockt up, that there is no coming at it, unless we have the Key of the interpretation of their Church along with us, to let us in to the right sense and meaning of the Scriptures. In Answer here, we do acknowledge, that it is not the words, but the sense of the Scriptures, we are

to be ruled by, in our search of necessary truths, but not the interpretation and sense which they put upon them; we know not why we are to value their sense any more than they do ours, being wholly to seek, how this Spirit of interpreting went from other Churches, to speak by, and in the Church of *Rome* onely. We do not meet with it either in the Scriptures, or in the Antient Fathers, that it was ever acknowledged to be the right of the Church of *Rome*, to be the sole Interpreter of the holy Scriptures. We do honour the interpretation of the Scriptures, given by the concurring consent of the Fathers of the Primitive Church; and the Scriptures so expounded, giving us a full, and a clear Declaration independently upon the Tradition, or Interpretation of the *Roman* Church, of all the things to be surely believed by us, we may warrantably conclude, that the Church that receives, and proposeth onely this Declaration, hath the true Faith professed in it.

And here we do add farther on the behalf of the Church of *England*, that by the Scriptures thus expounded, there is nothing wanting in our Church, that goes to the Constitution of a Church. For besides that the Antient Apostolick Faith is received, and taught; the Sacraments be duly ministred, according to *Christ's* Institution; all Devotions are appointed to be decently celebrated, and we are in subjection under our Lawfull Governours. And what goes more to the Constitution of a Church, we meet not with it in the holy Scriptures, as expounded by the Antient Fathers of the Church.

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The great quarrel which the *Romanists* have against us in this matter is ; that we are not in Subjection under our Lawfull Governours, forasmuch as we disown any Jurisdiction the Church of *Rome* hath over us ; and there is no one thing they do more eagerly contend for, than their Pope's Jurisdiction, not over our Church onely , but over all the Churches of the whole World. Now because they do make this a matter of Faith, and insist upon it so mightily as they do, and that to no mean purposes , this being the thing they mainly amuse their Profelytes with , to enslave them the more in the Communion of their Church ; telling them, that it is onely by being in the Communion of their Church, that they are Catholicks, or Members of the Universal Church ; and the thing also, whereby they warrant their Profelytes of the Infallibility of their Church : For all Arguments concerning the fallibility of particular Churches, have nothing in them against the *Roman* Church, if that Church be the Universal Church :

This, I say, being the thing the *Romanists* put so much stress upon, it would be here inquired into ; and considering how much it is they glory of the unboundedness of the jurisdiction of their Church, one would think it should be a matter whereof there never had been any doubt in the Christian Church, especially in the Ages nearest the Apostles. And if we may fairly look so far backward, we may best expect, to meet with the true account of the Ancient Belief in this thing, in the Constitutions of the 4 first General Councils. But alas, instead of meeting with any thing, that seems to favour any such pretended Jurisdiction,

risdiction, we meet with nothing, but what on
 the contrary proves it to be a meer Usurpation.
 The sixth Canon of the Council of *Nice* appoints,
 that Ancient Customs should be observed, and
 that the Patriarch of *Alexandria* should have Ju-
 risdiction over the Churches of *Egypt*, *Libya*, and
Pentapolis, as it was the right by custom to the
 Bishop of *Rome*, to have Jurisdiction over the
 Churches of the West, belonging to his Patriar-
 chate; and in like manner, this and the next
 Canon of that Council, assign the Patriarchs of
Antioch and *Jerusalem* their particular Patriar-
 chates. And other honour than this, we do not
 find to be acknowledged to the Bishop of *Rome*
 in the 4 first Councils: That he was *Episcopus*
primæ sedis, *Bishop of the first See*; and that not
 by reason of any grant from *Christ*, but with re-
 gard to *Rome's* being the Head City of the Em-
 pire, as the 28 Canon of the Council of *Chal-*
cedon is most express in it, in these words, *Διὰ*
τὴ βασιλείαν τὴ πόλιν ἐκείνην, upon which ac-
 count, the same Canon gives equal priviledges,
 with the Patriarch of *Rome*, to the Patriarch of
Constantinople, because the City of *Constantinople*
 was then honoured in like manner with *Rome*,
 both with an Empire, and Senate, appointing
 the Patriarchate of *Constantinople* to be acknow-
 ledged the second after *Rome*. Now as to the
 Popes Jurisdiction over *England*, by his being
 Patriarch of the *West*, the *Romanists* have been
 challenged ever since the Reformation, to give
 instance of one Act of Jurisdiction he ever ex-
 exercised in the *English Church* for 300 years after
Christ, and they are not able to do it, and not
 having

having Jurisdiction in all that time, he stands excluded from having it to the worlds end, by the 8 Canon of the Council of *Ephesus*. To which Council the Bishops of *Cyprus* appealed from the Patriarch of *Antioch*, and because it did appear that that Patriarch had no right of Jurisdiction over the *Cyprian* Bishops before that time, it was provided that he should neither have it for the time to come; and the Council in the same Canon provided, that no Bishop should invade anothers Province, where he had not had right of Jurisdiction before that time, time out of mind, giving a reason for it becoming the Disciples of the Meek and Lowly *Jesus*, lest his carriage herein should resemble *Ἰσρίας τὴν ἐν νομίμῳ*, the huffing pride of secular Powers. This Council was held in the fourth Century: if the Bishops of *Rome* had title to *England* then, let them shew it; if they had it not then, they are by this Council excluded from the having of any Jurisdiction over us to the worlds end. We are not ignorant what stress it is they put upon the third Canon of the Council of *Sardica*, which was no General Council; and how gladly they would have it pass for a Canon of the *Nicene* Council. Now all that that Canon provides, is onely this, that in case of difference between Bishops, if the difference could not be decided within the Province, the memory of *St. Peter* if it seemed good to the Bishops, might be honoured by writing to *Julius* Bishop of *Rome* for his judgment in the controversie. But what advantage is this to the Bishop of *Rome* when he pretends his Jurisdiction to be of Divine Right, to have a Coun-

cil complement his See, with an *if it please you*, let us pay some respect to the Memory of St. Peter.

In a word, the 4 first Councils gave the Bishop of Rome no other honour or power but that of a Patriarch, whence we may conclude, that his being an Universal Monarch was an unknown thing to them; for had it been known to them, their making of him a Patriarch, when *Christ* before had made him an Universal Monarch, had much resembled, and been every way as absurd, as a Parliament's making their Lawfull King a Major General.

When the point of the Pope's Supremacy came to be canvased in the days of *Henry* the Eighth, every Bishop but one subscribed the King's Supremacy, and not onely so, but in testimony of their sincerity in what they did, they openly disputed for it, and published Books in the defence of it, and yet remained Papists in all points but this of the King's Supremacy; and whence is it now, that what the Papists have so little to say for from Antiquity, and that when it came to be inquired into, was rejected by them who were so far from being Protestants, that at the same time they rejected the Pope's Supremacy, they burnt Protestants; whence is it that they are now so eager for this one point, that they could dispense with Protestants in the other Articles for which they once burnt them, provided they would but subscribe to them in this one thing?

They may pretend zeal to the salvation of our Souls, in being thus concerned for our being of
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this belief with them; but till they resolve us, how it is possible that that point that was never dreamt of by the Primitive Saints and Martyrs, should now become the great salvation point; they must excuse us, if we suspect that they have onely a Plot upon us, much like that *Simoon and Levi* had upon the *Sechemites*, when they pretended Religion certainly, and their Souls good, in perswading them to be Circumcised; when all their drift was, to get the Mastery of them, to take their revenge upon them, and to possess themselves of their Goods and Chattels: in like manner I fear it may truly be suspected, the main drift of the Papists to be agreed and to be one People with us, (onely as the *Sechemites* were to be Circumcised, we must acknowledge the Pope's Supremacy) is this; that having hereby the Mastery again over us, they may have their hands in our Pockets again, and drain us as they did of old of our Treasure. They shewed sufficiently how burning hot their zeal was towards our welfare in the few years Queen *Mary* reigned, and had she reigned longer, it's likely, it would have been more enflamed. Our Ancestours felt so much of it in that little time, as hath given their Posterity cause ever since to pray From the tender mercies of an Inquisition, and the burning zeal of Papists, Good Lord deliver us.

Now to apply this to our selves that hath been spoken, to shew what it is that men may satisfie themselves by, they are of that Church that hath the true Faith professed in it. Foras-

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Now to apply this to our selves that hath been spoken, to shew what it is that men may satisfie themselves by, they are of that Church that hath the true Faith professed in it. Foras-

much as we can fix here, that appealing to the holy Scriptures as interpreted by the Primitive Church, the Church of *England* is a true Church, teaching the Ancient Catholick and Apostolick Faith; and in which nothing is wanting, that goes to the Constitution of a Church, according to what we find to be the notion of a Church in the holy Scriptures; and that we have that evidence of it, that the mischievous and sly artifices of all our Adversaries is not able to overthrow; the Reprehension of the Text lies as home against us, as against the *Galatians*, if in the least we incline to forsake this Church, and the Faith professed in it, in such manner as the Apostle feared the *Galatians* were about to do by *Judaizing*, viz. by embracing Doctrines, and Customs foreign to Apostolical Tradition, recorded in the holy Scriptures. And for such we may safely account the Doctrines and Customs of the Church of *Rome* wherein they differ from us. It may seem a thing incredible that in such an Age of Light and Learning, there should be any fear of Mens being deluded and imposed upon so as to be in danger of this seduction, and discourses of this nature may be thought needless if not dangerous, as tending onely to amuse and frighten Men into fear, where no fear is. But His Majesty in his Proclamation for a General Fast, *Feb. 4. 1673.* acquainting us with *the restless practices of the Romish Recusants threatening a subversion both of Church and State*; and having had so many instances since that time, not onely of their practices of that nature, but of their presumptions

sumptions of prevailing in rooting out the Pestilent Heresie, as they are pleased to stile the Protestant Religion, we are I hope allowed to account it no needles Jealousie, that too many are thus disposed to be cheated and couzened of their Religion: For is it to be imagined, that if they did not meet with good Markets in *England*, and find Chap-men for their pitifull counterfeited Wares, to make Exchanges with to the Advantage of the *Roman Church*, we should have so many Factours from *Rome* among us, that it is much to be suspected, we have ten Doctrine Factours from *Rome*, to one that Trades in any thing this Land affords?

Well, the aforesaid Proclamation calls upon us to look upon it as a judgment, we should be in this danger from *Rome*; and we may well look upon it as so, for a People to be so far besotted, or in the Apostles word bewitched, to forsake a Church where nothing is wanting that was believed in the Primitive Church, and where nothing is imposed to be believed by us, and that consonantly to the 7 Canon of the Council of *Ephesus*, but what we meet with in the Ancient Creeds, and those Creeds onely as the words of the eighth Article of Religion run, because they may be proved by good warranty of the holy Scriptures, to forsake this Church, for that wherein, if we believe not all that the Pope shall define to be a matter of Faith, we are Cursed of him, and in danger to fare worse from the Inquisition, than all his Curses can amount to, and if we do believe we run the danger of the Curse that is threatned to such as

add unto the Scriptures, the being cursed of God; when a People is so besotted as to be willing with this exchange, it may well be accounted a Judgement., and we find it inflicted as so upon such as receive not the Truth in the love of it, *2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. to be left to strong delusions, that they should believe a Lie.*

And to conclude all in a word of Exhortation, As when the hand of God is upon us in other Judgements, our eyes, and our hearts ought to be up unto him for the removing of them from us, charge we our selves with this duty as to this Judgement also. How ill did God take it at the hands of his People *Israel*, when being delivered from the Idolatries of *Egypt*, they were willing to return to it again, and how certainly had they all been destroyed for it, if it had not been for *Moses's* Intercession? And let not any reply and say here, they are but a few who are thus bewitched, and how is it to be an affliction to us all? when the word of God gives us express instances for our afflicting our selves in this case, *Revel. 2. 14. the Church of Pergamus* is reprov'd, for having such amongst them as taught corrupt Doctrine; and Ver. 16. called to Repentance for it; and Ver. 20. the Church of *Thyatira* is reprov'd for the very same thing. Now to shew that we are truly afflicted and grieved for the defections of our Brethren, let us do it, in praying for them, as our Church directs, that God would be pleas'd to bring all such as have erred and been deceived, into the way of Truth again: And let the defections of others warn him that

that standeth to take heed lest he fall : and forasmuch as our help in this, as in all other duties, is of the Lord, Pray we heartily for our selves unto God that he would stablish, strengthen, and settle us, that we may continue in the Profession of our Religion stedfast to the end ; without which we onely vainly pretend to sorrow for the defection of others ; and whilst God is pleased to continue to us the true Religion, let us do our utmost endeavour to be true and firm to it, without which we vainly pray for our own stedfastness.

And here give me leave to recommend two things to the care of all true Protestants, as the things wherein they may best express their truth and firmness to their Religion, and whereby they may best endeavour to preserve themselves stedfast in it.

In the first place, it is our duty to this purpose, to concern our selves to observe, and perform all that Worship, with the sincerest devotion, which our Church appoints ; without which whilst we talk of a Church, and our being of the best Church, we do not appear to be of any Church at all, and we give the greatest advantage that can be to the Papists to deride us. The thing they twitted us with of old was this, Where was your Church before *Luther* ? but by leaving off in a careless way those Offices of Worship our Church appoints us, we now put this stone into their hands to throw at us, where is your Church now ? was there ever a Church without

without publick Worship ? were not the first Christians called a Church from their continuing in the Apostles Fellowship and Doctrine, their breaking the Sacramental Bread together, and performing together solemnly their publick Prayers ? If we tell them we have good Offices set us for publick Worship, then they upbraid us, as well they may, with the little regard the generality of men have to come to them, or to come even at all to publick Worship, onely in time enough to hear the Sermon, which cannot entitle them, as neither did it the Primitive Christians, to the denomination of a Church. And it is worth the being considered here, that the Papists will permit their Profelytes to come to our Sermons but not to our Sacraments nor our Prayers, for that would look like embodying with us, as our joyning and continuing in the constant Celebration of these Ordinances, is our embodying into, and being a Church. Now whilst we by a gross neglect of these Churching duties even give over the being a Church, can we expect, that God should continue us a Church ? Nay, may we not rather dread, that God in anger, as he threatens *Ephesus*, should remove our Candlestick out of its place, for the loss of our first love, the love our Ancestors had at first to those duties, when they were newly escaped from the Idolatry and Superstition of the Church of *Rome* ?

Secondly, Whilst God is pleased to continue the true Religion among us, be we true to it, not betraying it, by exposing it to scandall through any impiety or prophaneness, but adorn-
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ing it in all things according to the rules it gives us that way, with an inoffensive Conversation.

And as that which may make us the more circumspect in this important matter of walking answerably to our Religion,

1. Consider in the first place, what a heavy Judgment it would be, for God to take away the Light he hath set up amongst us, by blessing us with the Protestant Religion, and to leave us again to the Education and Nurturing of the Traditions, Fables, and Dreams of Monks and Fryers. And what can so provoke him to it, as not to use it to the purposes he sends it, to mend and cleanse our ways by taking heed unto it? but to abuse it onely to hunt out for notions by it, to be able to dispute and quarrel about the Circumstantials onely of Religion, and to defend some points that do generally disturb the Peace of the Church, more than they do edifie any member of it?

Secondly, Consider we with our selves, that nothing can make us so steady in our Religion, as the living according to its Precepts, *in righteousness and true holiness*; one Scripture recommends to us the *holding forth the word of Life*, and another commands the *holding of it fast*, 2 Tim.

1. 13. Now he that observes the first Direction, and by God's grace orders himself in that manner that his Life is a true Comment upon the word of Life he hath received into his heart, and doth so hold it forth, he takes the sure way to the

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holding of it fast, and so as to the true Religion it teacheth, nothing so fixeth it with us, as when our Conversations are imbued with it, by our every day practice of it, and our observing with the severest care all the duties it directs us.

Thirdly, Consider we that in this way of living up to the rules of our Religion, we can onely put our selves under hopes that God may have mercy of us, and still continue it unto us: as the holding of the truth in unrighteousness, brings down God's Judgments upon them who do it, so we may hopefully promise our selves that the holding of it in righteousness, may put us under the blessed influences of his Grace and Favour, and be the means of his preventing all our fears, and continuing to us the Gospel and the true Protestant Religion we are taught out of it, and the blessings it brings with it, and of his rejoycing over us to do us good; making us still as hitherto we have been, the envy of the Church of *Rome*, and all her Emissaries, and the Glory, Honour, and Joy of all the Reformed Churches in the World.

F I N I S.

